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Letter dated 1 April 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you herewith a concept paper for the Security Council debate on the implementation of the measures set out in the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507), to be held on 29 April 2010 (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

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Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 1 April 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Open debate on the implementation of the measures set out in the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507)

Concept paper by the presidency of the Security Council

A. Overview

1. The Security Council is mandated under Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations to ensure prompt and effective action on behalf of all Member States in order to maintain international peace and security. The Members of the United Nations, under Article 25 of the Charter, agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Council. With five permanent members and 10 elected non-permanent members, the composition of the Security Council is like that of no other institution within the United Nations system. It carries great responsibility. At the same time, the standing of the Council in the international community is, at least to some extent, either enhanced or diminished by perceptions of the transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness of its working methods.

2. The working methods of the Security Council are important to meet these two, sometimes conflicting, requirements: first, to make decisions that will ensure prompt and effective action to maintain international peace and security; and second, to gain the support of the wider United Nations membership for such decisions of the Security Council.

3. The Security Council has made progress in enhancing the efficiency and transparency of its work, as well as interaction and dialogue with non-members of the Council. The adoption of S/2006/507 and subsequent notes by the President related to working methods is notable. Article 30 of the Charter stipulates that the Council shall adopt its own rules of procedure and the Council should continue to work to improve its working methods. At the same time, there is great interest in the working methods from the general membership as can be seen in the number of Member States that participated in the last open debate on working methods of the Security Council in August 2008. The next open debate will provide an opportunity for members of the Council as well as the general membership to express their views and interact on this issue.

B. Objective of the debate

4. The purpose of the open debate scheduled for 29 April is to assess the implementation of the measures set out in the annex to S/2006/507, with a view to improving their implementation, taking into account, inter alia, the issues raised in the debate in August 2008, as well as recent Security Council practices. In order to have a useful discussion, the debate should focus on the three areas of transparency, interaction with non-members and efficiency, which are of key importance to Council members and non-members alike. Some illustrative examples of the issues on which the discussions could focus are given below.

5. Practical suggestions on how to improve the working methods of the Security Council are encouraged. Japan intends to follow up the discussions in the open debate in the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, of which it serves as Chair.

C. Possible issues for discussion at the open debate

Transparency

6. The Security Council has recently taken various steps in making its work more transparent to non-members:

- The now established uniform practice of new Council Presidents briefing non-member States shortly after the adoption of each month's programme of work
- Greater coverage of the work of the various subsidiary bodies, including through a now almost universal practice of their issuing written annual reports and through expanded records of their work in the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly and on the Security Council web pages
- A measurable increase in the level of detail included in the introduction to the annual report, which has almost doubled in length in the past two years
- The now widespread practice of each Council presidency preparing a published assessment of its presidency, which, although issued under its sole responsibility, expands the information available on the problems faced by the Council in its work and how these have been approached

7. Challenges remain. How to keep the non-members informed of the activities of the Security Council in a timely manner, while recognizing the need for informal discussions among Council members to make decisions for prompt and effective action, continues to be a challenge. The degree to which the presidency briefs the non-members on the activities of the Council depends from presidency to presidency. What factors play into such variance and could there be remedies that would optimally meet the needs of both Council members and non-members? The note by the President (S/2006/507) contains several working methods to make such information-sharing more systematic, and participants in the open debate may wish to comment on ways to enhance their implementation.

Interaction and dialogue with non-members

8. The Security Council has made progress in its interaction with the non-member States in carrying out its work. Open meetings regularly allow participation of parties that have a direct interest in an issue. The Council has used the wide variety of options available to it to have interaction with the broader United Nations membership. The Council has strengthened its interaction with troop- and police-contributing countries, taking into account the paper on charting a new horizon for United Nations peacekeeping of the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support. The Security Council has also strengthened interaction with regional organizations. The Council has sometimes resorted to informal dialogues with interested parties to interact and to seek their views. During

the past two years, the Council members responsible for drafting the introduction to the Council's annual report have taken the initiative to discuss the introduction with non-members, such as Viet Nam in 2008 and Uganda in 2009. The Security Council now regularly invites the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission or chairs of the country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission to brief the Council. The Council invited the newly appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Staffan de Mistura, to consultations to engage in dialogue with the members of the Council, in an effort to engage the Special Representatives from early on.

9. Challenges remain. Some Member States have called for even wider participation in open meetings of the Security Council. Some are of the opinion that the Council needs to engage and seek the views of interested parties even more when considering an issue. The Security Council continues to seek better ways to interact and have dialogue with non-members.

Efficiency

10. The workload of the Security Council and its subsidiary organs is daunting in terms of its complexity, urgency and scope. In order to adequately deal with this workload, the Council needs to reflect on its working methods continuously to improve its efficiency. The comprehensive review of the current items on the Council's agenda is one such example. Although many of the issues related to efficiency may be regarded as primarily affecting the members of the Security Council, all United Nations Member States stand to gain from maximizing the efficiency of the Council in carrying out its Charter-mandated responsibilities. Discussions on such issues can also be a part of greater information-sharing, with the wider membership, on the Council's internal workings.

11. The length of statements during public meetings continues to be a challenge. The Security Council, in S/2006/507, encourages both members and non-members of the Council to deliver their statements in five minutes or less and each briefer to limit initial remarks to 15 minutes. Long public meetings have the potential to impede the efficient work of the Council and, instead of increasing the importance given to the issues discussed, can risk making those issues appear routine. Also, timely circulation of the reports prepared by the Secretary-General to Council members as well as to troop-contributing countries is important for the efficient work of the Council. The Council and the Secretariat are working together to ensure this.

12. Each year, five non-permanent members rotate in and out of the Council. How soon new members adjust to the work of the Council affects Council work, especially early in the year. For many elected members, learning the procedural aspects of the Security Council is a challenge. The provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council (S/96/Rev.7) set out the rules of the Council as they apply to the official meetings of the Council. The note by the President (S/2006/507) provides recommendations for the working methods of the Council in covering different dimensions of its work. Other helpful resources include the *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council*, which features applications and interpretations of the provisional rules of procedure by the Council since its inception, and the volume of *Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council*. Currently, as decided in S/2006/507, newly elected members have six weeks to observe the Council and

its subsidiary bodies. What continue to be the challenges for incoming elected members and what can be done to address these challenges?'

13. In recent years, the Council has broadened the formats and tools it uses to address conflicts or potential conflict situations, including informal interactive dialogues, meetings of experts, including with military officials of the Secretariat, quiet diplomacy by the President of the Council, wider contacts on Council missions to the field with individuals and groups beyond those representing Governments, closer cooperation and coordination of its efforts with those of the Secretary-General, and the introduction of new elements to the mandates of peacekeeping and political missions. The work of the Security Council should be assessed in the light of how effectively it deals with various issues that relate to the maintenance of international peace and security.